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ABSTRACT

Information is presented on a study determining the degree to which international graduate students studying in the United States reported different systems of motivation. The relationships between the postulated systems of motivation and self-perceptions of adequacy of language in academic study and in the broader life of the cultures were explored. The subjects were 84 graduate students whose native language is not English and who have studied at the State University of New York at Albany for at least a year. Students came from 27 different countries including China, India, Germany, Taiwan, Japan, Indonesia, Spain, South Korea, and Cyprus. Students were mailed a questionnaire, and based on responses, three motivation groups were formed (intrinsic, balanced, and instrumental). Results indicate that the intrinsic group generally ranked themselves higher in the non-academic than in the academic area, while the instrumental group rated their skills in the non-academic area lower than the students in both the balanced and instrumental group. In regard to travel, most students in the intrinsic group considered increasing their knowledge of American culture, history, and geography as a very important purpose. In the instrumental group, only 18 out of 44 rated the purpose as very important. In contrast, 13 students in the instrumental group thought keeping ties with people from the home country and adding knowledge to their curriculum and learning course was very important. Five tables are included. Contains 8 references. (SM)

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RELATIONSHIP OF TYPE OF MOTIVATION AND PERCEIVED SUCCESS OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Statement of the Problem

Each year more international students come to study in American colleges and universities. According to the Chronicle of Higher Education, 356,190 foreign students studied in the United States in 1987-1988 academic year, about 2 per cent more than the previous year. Among them, 156,190 (more than one third) were in graduate programs. Since 1985-1986, the number of foreign students in doctoral programs has risen by 35 percent, while enrollment in master's programs grew by 17 per cent. Three common characteristics of these students are: (1) They have chosen to study in this country rather than in their home country. (2) Many of these students left their families (wives or husbands and children) behind. (3) For most of these students, English is their second or even third language.

What leads these international students to decide to study in a completely new country while leaving their homes thousands of miles away? In this study, an effort has been made to explore motivations for such a decision. It is proposed that the motivations of the international students can be divided into two general categories. First,

international students see international study as a means of self-enhancement. They are motivated by a desire for new experience to learn about different culture, to make new friends. They hope to gain these experience on a personal level. This type of motivation has been called "intrinsic". Second, students see international study as a means of enhancing career opportunities in their home country. By studying abroad, they may acquire specific skills that are valued and rewarded and which can not be learned at home. For many, an out-of-country degree may be a formal or informal requirement for professional advancement. This type of motivation has been called "instrumental". It is assumed that all international students are motivated by both intrinsic and instrumental considerations. It is also proposed that there are individual differences in the strength of each motivational system. Thus, it is expected that some individuals will be relatively more motivated by intrinsic considerations, others by instrumental factors, while for others, these two types of motivation are more nearly balanced.

Assuming that international students can indeed be divided into the above groups, then what related differences might be expected? Individual's evaluations related to English language have been examined. It is argued that students whose primary motivation is intrinsic should be more

likely to evaluate their previous language learning and their current language adequacy in terms of the degree to which they can fully participate in the culture in which they study. They should show relatively less concern for their competence in language in academic work as long as they can maintain adequate academic standards. Students whose motivation is primarily instrumental should judge their language experiences based on their perceived success in academic work in this country. They should show relatively less concern for whether their language experiences allow them to participate socially and culturally in the U.S. society. Students whose motivation is balanced should show relatively equal evaluations in academic and non-academic settings.

The objective of this study was to determine the degree to which international graduate students studying in the United States did indeed report different systems of motivation. Then the relationships between the postulated systems of motivation and self-perceptions of adequacy of language in academic study and in the broader life of the culture were explored.

Related Literature

Some similar studies of relationship between international students' motivation and their performance in

foreign countries can be found based on this conceptual framework. For twelve years, Gardner and Lambert (1972) investigated the roles of attitude and motivation in the learning of foreign languages in high school in Canada, parts of the U.S. and the Philippines, learning French and English. The subjects involved American, Canadian, French-American and Filipinos. They found that motivation was the crucial variable in learning. They classified motivation into integrative motivation and instrumental motivation. Integrative motivation is defined as:

> "the student wishes to learn more about the other cultural community because he is interested in it in an open-minded way, to the point of eventually being accepted as a member of that other group. The learner's ethnocentric tendencies and his attitude toward the members of the other group are believed to determine how successful he will be in learning the new language."

Instrumental motivation is defined as: "the student toward the language learning task is characterized by a desire to gain social recognition or economic advantages through knowledge of a foreign language. The perspective in this instance is more self-oriented in the sense that a person prepares to learn a new code in order to derive benefits of a non-interpersonal sort" (Gardner and Lambert, 1972).

The findings in American studies revealed that students with strong motivation and desire to learn French obtained good grades in French at school. In the Philippine studies, students whose approach was an instrumentally oriented were successful in developing proficiency of English. Gardner and Lambert concluded that the instrumental approach to language study is extremely effective in settings where there is an urgency about mastering a second language. Nevertheless, for another subgroup of Filipino students, an integrative orientation toward the study of English had a striking effect on proficiency, especially the audio-lingual aspects. The terms "instrumental" and "integrated motivation" used by Gardener and Lambert (1972) are similar to the terms "instrumental" and "intrinsic motivation" we are using throughout the study.

Lizabeth England (1982) administered language attitude questionnaire to 84 adult foreign students who were considered successful English learners at University of Illinois at Urbana-Chanmpaign. These students included Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Spanish, Swalili and so on. The purpose of the questionnaire was to test the assumption of integrative orientation. The results showed little evidence of an integrative orientation among those successful English learners and the students may not have an integrative orientation toward American culture. Based on our conceptual

framework, the integrative orientation is associated with the intrinsically motivated students in our study.

Gardner, Ladonde and Moorcroft (1984) examined the role of language aptitudes, attitudinal/motivational attributes on the rate of learning French vocabulary. The subjects were 170 university students enrolled in an introductory psychology course. The data analysis yielded a multitrait-multimethod correlation matrix in order to determine the attributes towards achievement in learning 25 French and English vocabulary pairs. One of the results indicated that indices of language aptitude and integrative motivation were independent correlates of indices of French achievement.

Subjects

The subjects were 84 graduate students whose native language is not English and who have studied in the State University of New York at Albany at least for a year. The list of names of these students was obtained from International Students Services and the copies of the questionnaire were mailed to 298 individuals. Thirty three letters were returned because people were not at the address given. About 32% students responded and became the subjects of the study. These students came from 27 different countries including China, Germany, Taiwan, India, Japan, Indonesia, Spain, South Korea and Cyprus. Their reported TOEFL scores

ranged from 550 to over 650. The reported last semester grades were between B+ and A, GPA between 3.5 to 4. In general, only 6 out of 84 students had failed in some aspects of their academic program. Thus the group can be described as successful in academic study.

Findings

1. To judge students' motivation, two sets of items were constructed. Each contained four statements, and each set of items describe possible reasons for studying in the United States. Two of the four statements in each cluster gave reasons for international study such as learning about American people. It was assumed that the objectives stated in these items were not likely to be met directly by academic study. Two of the reasons were based on objectives directly linked to academic study, such as acquiring specific useful skills. The non-academic reasons were conceptualized as reflecting intrinsic, and the academic reasons as instrumental motivation. Students were asked to rank the four statements in each cluster in order of importance. Those who ranked at least three of the intrinsic statements as first or second were classified into the intrinsic group. Those who ranked two intrinsic statements first or second were classified into the balanced group. Students who ranked one or less intrinsic statement first or second were classified

into the instrumental group. The summary of the responses to the two sets of motivation items are reported in Tables 1 and 2.

TABLE 1: SUMMARY OF RESPONSES TO THE FIRST SET OF MOTIVATION ITEM BY GROUPS

		Rank				
INTRINSIC		1	2	3	4	Total
	Groups:					
To learn more about American society.	Intrinsic	8	5	3	1	n=17
	Balanced	4	4	2	12	n=22
	Instrumental	0	3	20	22	n=45
	Total	12	12	25	35	N=84
	Groups:					
To gain personal experience	Intrinsic	5	7	5	0	n=17
	Balanced	7	8	5	2	n=22
	Instrumental	1	2	21	21	n=45
	Total	13	17	31	23	N=84
INSTRUMENTAL						
	Groups:					
To acquire specific skills for my job at home	Intrinsic	3	4	5	5	n=17
	Balanced	5	9	5	3	n=22
	Instrumental	31	12	2	0	n=45
	Total	39	25	12	8	N=84
	Groups:					
To gain a better position in my country	Intrinsic	1	1	4	11	n=17
	Balanced	6	1	10	5	n=22
	Instrumental	13	28	1	3	n=45
	Total	20	30	15	19	N=84

In the first cluster of items, respondents ranked most highly "To acquire specific skills for job at home". This statement was ranked first in order of importance for 39 of the 84 respondents. In the second cluster of items, the

TABLE 2: SUMMARY OF RESPONSES TO THE SECOND SET OF MOTIVATION ITEM BY GROUPS

		Rank				
INTRINSIC		1	2	3	4	Total
	Groups:					
To learn values, culture of Americans	Intrinsic	12	5	0	0	n=17
	Balanced	6	2	8	6	n=22
	Instrumental	0	5	16	24	n=45
	Total	18	12	24	30	N=84
	Groups:					
To meet new people in a new country	Intrinsic	5	10	2	0	n=17
	Balanced	7	6	5	4	n=22
	Instrumental	3	2	25	15	n=45
	Total	15	18	32	19	N=84
INSTRUMENTAL						
	Groups:					
To achieve high grade for my job at home	Intrinsic	0	2	11	4	n=17
	Balanced	6	11	2	3	n=22
	Instrumental	25	19	0	1	n=45
	Total	31	32	13	8	N=84
	Groups:					
To obtain higher respect in my country	Intrinsic	0	0	4	13	n=17
	Balanced	3	3	7	9	n=22
	Instrumental	16	20	4	5	n=45
	Total	19	23	15	27	N=84

statement "To achieve high grades for my job at home" was ranked first in importance for 31 respondents. Both of these items were classed as "instrumental". Although these instrumental items were most frequently chosen, over-all they were not the most important reasons for international study for some of the subjects. As can be seen from the frequencies reported in Tables 1 and 2, only a few of the respondents in the intrinsic group ranked these items in first place.

Among the intrinsic items, "To learn the values and culture of Americans" was most highly rated. It was ranked first by eighteen individuals, but was usually ranked third or fourth for members of the "instrumental" group. From these data it was concluded that international students do indeed differ in their primary reason for study in this country. Thus, seventeen of the 84 respondents were classified into the intrinsic group, 22 were in balanced group, while 45 were in the instrumental group.

2. Language skills are critical for international students. These skills are used in the academic context and in the broader non-academic setting. If success in the academic setting is relatively more important for one group of students, and success in the non-academic setting is more important for others, then one might see differences in how these skills are evaluated in the academic and non-academic context. To explore this question respondents were asked to rate the degree to which they judged their skills in listening, speaking, reading and writing as adequate for both academic and non-academic situations. A five-point scales was used, of which 5 was very adequate and 1 was very inadequate. Results are tabulated in Table 3.

TABLE 3: MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF PERCEIVED LANGUAGE SKILLS IN ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC SETTINGS BY GROUPS

Language Skills		INTRINSIC GROUP N = 17		BALANCED GROUP N = 22		INSTRUMENTAL GROUP N = 45	
		a*	na**	a	na	a	na
Listening	M.	4.29	4.23	4.19	4.09	4.09	3.84
	SD.	.69	.90	.75	.64	.97	.93
Speaking	M.	3.82	4.24	4.00	4.05	3.80	3.80
	SD.	.95	.90	.90	.84	.97	1.00
Reading	M.	4.12	4.53	3.91	4.29	3.84	4.07
	SD.	.60	.51	.79	.63	.95	.94
Writing	M.	3.94	4.41	3.91	4.05	3.78	3.87
	SD.	.82	.49	.72	.84	.93	.97

* Academic ** Non-academic

Overall, differences between the three groups were not statistically significant. However, there was a trend for members of the intrinsic group to rank themselves higher in the non-academic area than in the academic area. For the skill of listening, the rankings were about the same for academic and non-academic settings. In the other three skill areas, individuals in the intrinsic group ranked themselves higher in the non-academic than the academic area. For the instrumental group evaluations of language skills for

academic and non-academic settings were highly similar. Further, members of the instrumental group consistently ranked their skills in non-academic areas lower than students did in the intrinsic group. For ratings of non-academic skills, members of the intrinsic group always had the highest average self-rating, followed by the balanced group, and then the instrumental group.

3. Do differences in motivation relate to reasons given for travel in this country? To explore this question, four items were constructed describing possible purpose for travel such as making new friends, or learning American culture, history and geographic features (intrinsic), or getting the knowledge related to the curriculum, or keeping ties with people from home country (instrumental). The results are reported in Table 4.

As can be seen, all three groups considered learning American history, geography and culture as very important reason of travelling, 10 out of 16 from the intrinsic group and 18 out of 44 from the instrumental group. Travelling to keep ties to people from home country was very important for 13 students from instrumental group, 4 out of 22 from balanced group and no one from intrinsic group. These differences were consistent with the postulated construct that intrinsically motivated students should consider self-enhancement for travel as more important than the

instrumentally motivated students. None from the intrinsic group reported keeping ties to people from home country as very important, but about one third from instrumental group reported this as a very important reason to travel.

Table 4: SUMMARY OF RESPONSES TO THE PURPOSE OF TRAVELLING BY GROUPS

		Very important	important	Not important	Total
INTRINSIC					
	Groups:				
Providing an opportunity to meet different people.	Intrinsic	4	5	7	n=16
	Balanced	1	10	11	n=22
	Instrumental	2	16	26	n=44
	Total	7	31	44	N=82
	Groups:				
Increasing knowledge of American history, geography and culture.	Intrinsic	10	4	2	n=16
	Balanced	10	11	1	n=22
	Instrumental	18	23	3	n=44
	Total	38	38	6	N=82
INSTRUMENTAL					
	Groups:				
Contributing to my curriculum and learning course.	Intrinsic	1	1	14	n=16
	Balanced	4	5	13	n=22
	Instrumental	5	7	32	n=44
	Total	10	13	59	N=82
	Groups:				
Keep ties to people from my home country.	Intrinsic	0	9	7	n=16
	Balanced	4	11	7	n=22
	Instrumental	13	11	20	n=44
	Total	17	31	34	N=82

Note: There are two missing responses out of 84 subjects

4. Another question considered is whether students in the three groups would spend different amounts of time in

various kinds of informal activities such as talking to people in social situations or reading newspaper and magazines, or writing letters etc.. To explore this question, respondents were asked to indicate the time they spent per week during the last six months in the informal language situations involving listening, speaking, reading and writing in this country. Table 5 presents the median hours among the three groups.

In general, the data in Table 5 was not consistent well with the postulation that intrinsic group students would spend more time than students in the instrumental group. The median difference between the two groups for "Speaking and exchanging ideas in social situations" was relatively large, that is 8.20 and 4.00 respectively. For all three groups, students spent more hours on listening rather than speaking, reading and writing in the four areas of activities. It can also be seen that balanced group spend more time in listening, speaking and reading than the other two groups.

Table 5: MEDIAN HOURS SPENT PER WEEK IN INFORMAL SITUATION DURING THE LAST SIX MONTHS IN THE US BY GROUPS

	INTRINSIC GROUP N = 17	BALANCED GROUP N = 22	INSTRUMENTAL GROUP N = 45
Listening to people talking outside classroom or watching TV.	17.50	20.00	15.00
Speaking and exchanging ideas in social situations	8.50	11.00	4.00
Reading English materials such as novels, magazine or newspaper	5.00	11.00	4.00
Writing English such as letters, notes or messages to your friends	2.50	2.00	2.00

Summary

Eighty four international graduate students studying at the State University of New York at Albany responded to a mailed questionnaire. Based on their responses, three motivation groups were formed, that is intrinsic, balanced and instrumental. Findings in this study indicated that the intrinsic group students generally ranked themselves higher

in the non-academic area than in the academic area, while instrumental group people students rated their skills in non-academic area lower than the students in both balanced and instrumental group. As reasons for travel, a majority of the students in the intrinsic group considered increasing the knowledge of American culture, history and geography as a very important purpose. In the instrumental group, 18 out of 44 also rated the purpose as very important. In contrast, 13 students in the instrumental group thought that keeping ties with people from home country and adding knowledge to their curriculum and learning course was very important, while no one in the intrinsic group rated as very important reason for travel. For the hours spent per week in the various kinds of informal situations, there was no consistency that intrinsic group students should spend more time in listening, speaking, reading and writing in the last six months in the United States. However, students in the balanced group reported more hours in listening, speaking and reading than the other two groups.

Discussion

To an increasing degree, international students are coming to this country for graduate study. What are their motivations? In the present study, two systems of motivation have been postulated and explored. A minority of this group

appeared to be strongly motivated by a desire to learn more about the American culture, make new friends, get personal experience. In terms of this study, their motivation is described as intrinsic. A majority of the group was generally more instrumental, placing more importance on acquiring specific skills and obtaining better position in their home countries. This is not surprising since many of the international students were government funded and have been oriented in an instrumental way.

The two systems of motivation were evaluated in terms of the students' perceived language skills in academic and non-academic settings. It was found that both intrinsically and instrumentally motivated students rated their language skills as adequate to deal with academic and non-academic demands. However, students who were more strongly intrinsically motivated, perceived their skills in non-academic areas higher than in the academic areas. Those more strongly instrumentally motivated students perceived their skills in non-academic areas lower than the students in both balanced and intrinsic groups. It should also be noted that different motivations resulted in differences in the purpose of travelling. Students in the intrinsic group were more likely to consider travel as an opportunity for self-enhancement, while students with more instrumental strength were more likely to travel in conjunctions with

their current academic study to keep ties to people from their home country. Thus, individual differences among the international students can be found in the strength of the two systems of motivation.

Note:

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